

## What is Happening to Modern Architecture?

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Lewis Mumford and Henry-Russell Hitchcock's impassioned confrontation at the Museum of Modern Art's 1948 symposium, «What is Happening to Modern Architecture?» culminated a 20-year-long debate between the two historian-critics (Figure 1). At stake were no less than two strongly competing points of view, based on two competing historiographies for modern architecture: Mumford was indebted to «organic» principles, and guided by ecological and cultural concerns, whereas Hitchcock favored the machine metaphor, its criteria formal, style-oriented, and symbolic. Inciting the confrontation was Mumford's article, «Status Quo,» published in the widely read journal, *The New Yorker* in October 1947.<sup>1</sup> There, Mumford proposed the «Bay Region style» as an alternative to the «international style,»—the latter representing for him far too narrow, even sterile modernism still being promoted by the Museum of Modern Art fifteen years after its «international style» exhibition. Mumford argued that Hitchcock had overlooked modernism's complexity, sense of social purpose, and «personalism» by continuing to identify it with modernist paintings and by investing it with a false and narrow symbolism of the machine. Such a pointed questioning of the «international style» as modernism's principle mode of explanation looked like an act of heresy to Hitchcock as well as to his associates at the Museum of Modern Art, Alfred Barr and Philip Johnson—so they organized the symposium, «What is Happening to Modern Architecture?» for February 1948 as the Museum's official response.<sup>2</sup>

The symposium opened with Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Alfred Barr calling into question Mumford's proposal of the «Bay Region style»—at the time strongly identified with the houses of the California architect, William Wurster—as a significant alternative development in modern architecture (Figure 2). Barr argued that the Bay Region style, rather than being what Mumford considered an important and distinctive type of modernism, represented instead merely a local manifestation of the much broader and more significant «international style»—that is, in formal terms, the new conception of architecture as volume rather than mass, the

use of a regularity of structure rather than symmetry as the means of ordering a design, and the absence of applied decoration. Besides, with its emphasis on houses, the Bay Region style, a mere «cottage style,» lacked the serious-mindedness of the «international style»—and so at best, it stood at the periphery of the museum's earlier, more rigorous modernism.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, it was hardly necessary to shift off axis to the Bay Region.

Mumford, as the symposium's moderator, had little opportunity to speak, but at the symposium's end and later, in a letter published with the symposium's proceedings, he criticized what he considered Hitchcock and the Museum's exclusively academic, narrow, and Europe-oriented perception of modernism. First, Mumford argued, the «Bay Region style» should not be considered the provincial manifestation that Hitchcock and Barr made it out to be, but instead a native form of modernism, which had matured in concert with America's cultural development. Second, the style's variety accommodated many building types and situations, and its complexity, humanism, and range transcended the mere localism suggested by the term «cottage style.» And finally, «cottage style» could not account for the depth and range of the Bay Region tradition, «so wide that it includes Maybeck at one and Gardner Dailey at the other.» The tradition's continued vitality over time, along with the example it provided other regions throughout the world, invested it with a much greater relevance for contemporary architecture, in Mumford's view, than the by now old and too restrictive canon of early avant-garde forms constituting Hitchcock's «international style.»<sup>4</sup> William Wurster did, in fact, design low-cost, prefabricated housing and his non-residential building projects such as the Schuckl Canning Company's office building in Sunnyvale confirmed the expressive possibilities of his California idiom in other building types (Figure 3).

Mumford and Hitchcock, then, stood at cross-purposes over what it meant to be modern, with Mumford's regionalist argument favoring an architecture that meshed with the society, culture, and environment of a place—in this case, the California Bay Region—and Hitchcock's visual argument—as shown by his definition and advocacy of the «international style»—seeking touchstone monuments with formal qualities so powerful that they resonated as acontextual objects. Hitchcock, along with Philip Johnson, had developed the visual principles on which he grounded his judgments in his first book, *Modern Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration* of 1928 and then refined them in the catalog, *Modern Architecture: International Style Exhibition*, published with the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition of 1932.<sup>5</sup> He was determined to have those visual principles characterize modern architecture in a fashion comparable to the corresponding principles that he maintained archaeologists had identified in the great styles of previous eras.

For Hitchcock, the works of Le Corbusier and J. J. P. Oud, especially, embodied his ideal of high modernism, which he circumscribed with the category «the New Pioneers» (Figure 4). In the 1932 exhibition, Hitchcock and Philip Johnson exalted the work of the New Pioneers,

assigning it a concise set of identifying formal criteria, which served the end of delimiting a virtually closed canon of high modern forms. Their line of reasoning, which guided their selection of works and formal analysis of them, derived from Hitchcock's conviction that modern architecture declared in its precise lines, unornamented surfaces, and weightless volumes «a new feeling for form and the search for certain specific effects, or the lyrical visual equivalent for the audacious technical contrivances of the machine age.»<sup>6</sup> The airplanes, automobiles and ocean liners exposed by Le Corbusier in his *Towards a New Architecture* of 1923 proclaimed the inevitable: a new standard of beauty should replace those of the past. The machine had become the visual metaphor for a modern, twentieth-century industrial reality.

Lewis Mumford, by contrast, grounded his architectural criticism in the organic metaphor. He had voiced the scope of his commitment to organicism in architecture as well as urban planning in his first work of architectural history and criticism, *Sticks and Stones*, of 1924.<sup>7</sup> The sources of Mumford's organic metaphor were the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century counter-Enlightenment, or the «romantic reaction,» the 19<sup>th</sup>-century writers that Mumford admired, among them Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horatio Greenough, and John Ruskin, and more recently, the thought of the Scottish biologist-turned-regional planner, Patrick Geddes.<sup>8</sup> Geddes's sense of ecological wholeness held paradigmatic sway in Mumford's thought—design was above all else an organic matter, and universally so—from the intimacy of an individual dwelling to the vastness of a global landscape.

In his *Sticks and Stones*, Mumford invoked the organic metaphor as a critical standard for assessing works of architecture that dated from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to World War I—their aesthetic virtues, the processes governing their making, and the integrity of purpose identified with their creators. Organic architecture in its purest state Mumford found exemplified by simple vernacular buildings such as the 17<sup>th</sup>-century John Ward House in Salem, Massachusetts, composed of «weathered oaken masses» piled up «with a cumulative richness of effect»—their rustic forms dynamic, suited to their purposes, and built in harmony with their natural surroundings. Mumford was disappointed by what he considered the compromise of his ideal of organic architecture in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the classical revival styles supplanted the vernacular and especially in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when architecture reached a state of near disintegration under the weakening forces of industrialism: Mills and factories marred the landscape, along with the pioneer's «false work and scantling.» Not until the 1880s did architects with the imagination necessary to reinvigorate the impoverished legacy emerge on the scene—with the «great succession that began with Richardson and culminated with Frank Lloyd Wright.» Wright, especially, exemplified for Mumford what it meant to be modern as well as organic in an overwhelmingly industrial age. His houses, «the very products of the prairie,» signaled the optimism of organicism's continuing influence in the dark and spiritless morass of «mechanical architecture»—from factories to any «standardized conception of style» (Figure 5).<sup>9</sup>

Writing in his *Brown Decades* of 1931, Mumford noted that he found his ideal of organic beauty—grounded in the principles of simplicity, the truthful expression of function, and solid craftsmanship—forcefully demonstrated in the Brooklyn Bridge, which he called an «organism of nature.» He also found it demonstrated in the quiet, forceful, and integrated exterior of John Wellborn Root's Monadnock Building in Chicago, 1889, where he observed «a final clarification of structure going on from within» along with evidence in the brickwork of the craftsman's hand.<sup>10</sup> For Mumford, «craftsmanship, to put the distinction roughly, emphasizes the worker's delight in production.»<sup>11</sup> It revealed the intricate human imprint on any art, a source of universal respect, and so was essential to a beautiful as well as an ethical architecture.

Mumford developed his convictions about cities and about the ideal urban environment in his *Sticks and Stones*. His story began with the coherent medieval order of the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century American seaboard towns, whose hierarchical theocracies he found strangely unproblematic (Figure 6). Instead, he lauded their «tradition of culture applied to the land itself» and their sense of community purpose, evident in their emblematic landscapes with tree-lined streets converging on a central common flanked by a school and meetinghouse. Mumford's story assumed a critical tone as the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century's pioneers of «mechanical progress» and «manifest destiny» recklessly mined forests and soils as well as human resources, and so in the process suffered from a loss of community, as illustrated in the careless shanty architecture of their squatter settlements.<sup>12</sup>

Mumford's story reached an abrupt end with the final shattering of the organic pattern at the 20<sup>th</sup> century's turn in the mushrooming of a centralized, over-concentrated, and mechanistic metropolitan civilization. Monopolists in the monstrous cities, guided by a reckless policy of imperialism, drained for their acquisitive purposes the resources of the surrounding regions, and built colossal congestion-abetting systems of rapid transit, sewers, and water conduits, along with imposing architectural marvels to symbolize their power, «the simulacra of a living architecture.»<sup>13</sup> In Mumford's rendition of human civilization, such antagonistic counterforces of industrialism repeatedly disrupted the organic evolution of regional cultures and their artistic creations—that is why Mumford could not appreciate, much less comprehend, Hitchcock's emphasis on the machine as a symbol.

The intellectual backgrounds of Hitchcock and Mumford in part explain their contrasting viewpoints. Hitchcock studied art history at the Fogg Museum, Harvard, under the medievalist, Arthur Kingsley Porter. Porter was known for his scholarship on Romanesque architecture and for his emphasis on the aesthetic consequences of available building methods and materials; this, in turn, inspired Hitchcock's emphasis on the visual. Even more important, the Fogg Museum and its students were committed to connoisseurship, or to basing all art historical inquiry and criticism on a sharp scrutiny of the artifacts themselves, a tradition of

study inspired by art historian Bernard Berenson. From the outset of his studies, Hitchcock considered himself an art historian who specialized in the field of architecture.<sup>14</sup>

Outside of his education at the Fogg Museum, one of the most important influences on Hitchcock was Oswald Spengler's now classic work, *The Decline of the West* (1918, 1922).<sup>15</sup> Hitchcock was intrigued by Spengler's construction of a society's life cycle (from its creative phase of culture to its cold and rigidified phase of civilization and finally to its downfall) and by Spengler's precept that a civilization's great constructions served as majestic «prime symbols» clarifying its pattern of life and thought. In constructing his modern style, Hitchcock freely extended the Fogg's methods of connoisseurship into seeing, describing, and evaluating works of modern architecture. These, he believed, were not unlike works of fine art; their settings, whether social, political, urban, or regional, were simply not germane to their understanding. Once he made his selections, he described and ordered the key artifacts in a logical, comparative array under a Spenglerian schema that outlined with absolute clarity the cyclical chronology of a modern style.

Mumford, by contrast, educated himself as an American cultural historian and critic through academic coursework at the City College of New York and firsthand walking surveys of Manhattan, finding profound inspiration in the writings of Patrick Geddes. Mumford read Geddes's *City Development* (1904) and *Cities in Evolution* (1915) during his student days and later voiced repeatedly the centrality of Geddes's thought to his understanding of the built environment.<sup>16</sup> «From the moment I gathered the import of Geddes's words, I began walking through the streets of New York and planning excursions into its hinterland with a new purpose: looking into its past, understanding its present, replanning its future became indissoluble parts of a single process...»<sup>17</sup> Geddes taught Mumford *how* to see and evaluate buildings, through travel and direct observation, in the context of their cities, cultures, and regions. Geddes's fundamental proposition that organisms, including human beings and their artistic creations, thrived in communities interdependent with their natural surroundings nourished Mumford's conviction that societies and their architecture could not be studied, much less understood, in isolation from a broader cultural, urban, and geographical context. Architecture's analysis involved more variables—most of them contextual—than did the search for a single crystalline aesthetic of style.

In his *Golden Day* of 1926, Mumford examined the literature of 19<sup>th</sup>-century New England as a vital regional culture of the American past.<sup>18</sup> In what he called «the climax of the American experience,» Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Melville, and Hawthorne absorbed essential lessons from their European heritage, breaking away from it just as its decaying cultural order fractured, to develop a fresh and characteristically indigenous American literary expression: «an imaginative New World came to birth... a new hemisphere in the geography of the mind.»<sup>19</sup> Such a genesis of imaginative literary works in the soil of a region did not preclude

their universal significance: They could be at once native to their place as well as pivotal artistic contributions to civilization at large. Mumford's analysis of New England's regional culture in *The Golden Day* was rooted in Geddes's ideology of the organism and its environment: «cultivation is man's proper condition; without it, life is raw and empty.»<sup>20</sup> In focusing on New England literature, he became convinced that vigorous regional cultures flourished in places with strong indigenous characters at singular moments in time. They were always cultures in totality: Just as the work of New England writers bore the imprint of their time and place, so did their villages, as he portrayed them in *Sticks and Stones*.

In the early 1920s, with Geddes's example in mind, Mumford undertook realistic demonstration projects, aiming to put into practice the lessons of his historian's understanding of regional cultures and regional communities. His vehicle for implementing such a contemporary vision was the Regional Planning Association of America, or RPAA, which he founded in 1923. The RPAA's core membership comprised himself, along with Henry Wright, Clarence Stein, and Benton Mackaye. Mumford and the RPAA, with the financial support of Alexander Bing and his City Housing Corporation, built Radburn, New Jersey of 1928–33, among other social housing projects—a garden community with a low-density arrangement of dwellings situated in park-like natural surroundings (Figure 7).<sup>21</sup>

Ebenazar Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* of 1898 served as the RPAA's intellectual stimulus from the outset, but Mumford aspired to tailor its program to American conditions, and so directed it towards Geddes's method of civic survey—or what he considered a detailed diagnosis based on direct observation—and towards Geddes's «valley section,» the paradigmatic geographical model that outlined in falling topography the characterizing features of a region: its pattern of human settlement, geography, natural features, and economic life. Together, Mumford and the RPAA employed the «valley section» in addition to Geddes's civic survey, or what they called the «regional survey,» to create for New York a statewide regional plan.<sup>22</sup> Given Mumford's Geddes-inspired breadth of vision, then, it is not surprising that he should see architecture as a highly contingent discipline, never autonomous and so never purely a visual art. Rather, it drew its force instead from the characterizing particulars that he invested with accountability—the personal needs of the individual, the expressive qualities of building materials, the distinctiveness of a building site, and the cultural and geographical character of a specific region.

Mumford's integrated and balanced approach to the particular in architecture's critical interpretation could not have eluded Hitchcock more. For Hitchcock, such matters intrinsic, individual, and characteristic militated against the crystallization of style. So, too, did an excessive emphasis on nature and the environment, which threatened at every turn to dismantle architecture under the name «picturesque.» These Hitchcock grouped under the name «romanticism,» which he invested with amazing explanatory power in his *Modern*

*Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration* as the reason for architecture's 19<sup>th</sup>-century decline. Romanticism's action on architecture, Hitchcock called «primarily disintegrant,» the very antithesis of style.<sup>23</sup> Mumford, alternatively, considered romanticism a positive force in modern architecture's development—if only because it emphasized the built environment's effectiveness in mediating the subtle, sympathetic, and mutually enhancing relationships between a person and the natural surroundings. Mumford thought that it took humility on the part of historians and critics to interpret the actual complexity of architecture in its natural surroundings, along with a hands-on knowledge of countless human, craft-related, cultural, and environmental influences. And while Mumford acknowledged that Hitchcock had charted a new territory to establish a fundamental knowledge about modernism as a visual phenomenon, calling his *Romanticism and Reintegration* «remarkably sound and even prescient,» he refused to accept Hitchcock's determination in defining with an uncompromising visual clarity a singular modern style.<sup>24</sup>

The explosive confrontation between Mumford and Hitchcock at the Museum of Modern Art in 1948, then, was rooted in two very different ways of seeing the world of built artifacts—with Hitchcock's grounded in the methods of art historical connoisseurship and Mumford's in the ecological and social orientation of Geddes. Yet long before the 1948 debate, Mumford and Hitchcock had articulated their diverging perspectives about the modern in their contentious dialog over Frank Lloyd Wright—a dialog that began in 1929. Mumford found a kinship in Wright's organicist viewpoint—and especially in his deep and intuitive feeling as an architect for the natural environment. Hitchcock—by contrast—in his book, *Frank Lloyd Wright* of 1928, compared the architecture of Wright's early 20th-century Oak Park years with that of the European avant-garde, and argued that he could not possibly include Wright in his exalted category, New Pioneers.<sup>25</sup> He blamed Wright's persistent attachment to nature, orientalism, and to Whitman—in essence, the signs of his persisting 19<sup>th</sup>-century «romanticism.» Mumford vehemently disagreed with Hitchcock, arguing in a review of Hitchcock's book the following year that the historian should regard Wright instead as the New Pioneers' more advanced successor. Wright's commitment to organicism, Mumford argued, prophesied a future, ecologically aware society: He «kept the way open for a type of architecture which can come into existence only in a much more humanized and socially adept generation than our own.»<sup>26</sup> Mumford went on to explain in his *Brown Decades* of 1931 that «romanticism,» hardly Hitchcock's countervailing force in the history of modern architecture, represented to the contrary a necessary phase of its evolution: What had germinated in the romanticism of Richardson's work had matured into the organic discipline of Wright.

Hitchcock and Mumford's competing interpretations of Wright brought to light the polarizing tensions in their historiographies, and virtually predicted their decisive intellectual split at the Museum of Modern Art's 1948 symposium. That the debate should have as its subject the architecture of the California Bay Region only further exacerbated their differences. Earlier, at

least, they were able to find some common ground in Wright's organic approach. But when confronted with assessing the work of Wurster and his California contemporaries, they met insurmountable obstacles. Central to Mumford's favorable assessment of Wurster and California Bay Region architecture, not surprisingly, was its fulfillment of the many criteria he had long since established for determining a regional architecture's vitality. For Hitchcock, such regional vitality had little consequence; even the most cursory formal analysis of Bay Region architecture showed that it did not conform to the formal criteria by which he defined the «international style,» so by deduction, it had to be of minor historical significance.

Hitchcock had, in fact, made his first acquaintance with Bay Region architecture on a visit to California in the 1930s—there, he judged Wurster's work «perhaps duller than one expects.» For an «international phenomenon,» one had to go see Richard Neutra's houses—notably the Lovell Health House—in Los Angeles.<sup>27</sup> Mumford's encounter with Wurster and Bay Region architecture on a visit of a few years later, in 1941, served as a wholly contrasting affair of discovery, and set the tone for his advocacy of the Bay Region style in his 1947 essay in *The New Yorker*. He later recalled having explored the Bay Region with Wurster by car, while listening to his «autobiographic observations.» Wurster's consciousness of his own relationship to the Bay Region suggested for Mumford that the region had matured culturally, and so made timely the «delineation of the origins and continuities of this vital modern tradition.»<sup>28</sup> Mumford believed he had discovered around San Francisco Bay yet another instance of a fully developed regional culture—not unlike the literary culture of mid-19th century New England, which he had described earlier in his *Golden Day*.

Wurster observed in 1949, «when in the West, Lewis Mumford sensed that something vital had always been happening around San Francisco Bay. I am sure he felt this stemmed from a number of conditions and evidenced itself in the bulk of the work of many architects.»<sup>29</sup> For Mumford, the buildings to which Wurster was referring epitomized the spirit of the Bay Region—an environment whose unique geography, climate, and vegetation combined to stamp it with a powerful physical identity. In Wurster's view, it supported the complex pattern of human life, but also opened outward in deference to the landscape with extended spaces and views—as «the picture frame and not the picture» (Figure 8). Mumford, furthermore, found in Wurster's architecture the simple, unostentatious, and highly contextual buildings that he had praised earlier in *Sticks and Stones*. It had a studied tension between the vernacular and the formal, and so seemed to capture the proper balance of the native with the universal, and to render in clear visual terms the 50-year-old California tradition behind such a balance. In essence, Wurster's work appealed to Mumford for exactly the same reasons that it did not appeal to Hitchcock. After his discovery of Wurster's architecture, Mumford made it an objective in the 1940s to heighten the public's awareness—broadly and internationally—of Bay Region architecture as a paradigmatic modern regional idiom and a significant parallel modern tradition.



Mumford was joined by the Museum of Modern Art's Elizabeth Bauer Mock, who pointed out in her catalog accompanying the Museum's 1944 exhibition, «Built in USA Since 1932» that Wurster «was producing straightforward, essentially modern houses well before 1932.»<sup>30</sup> Mock further noted that another modernist in Europe, the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, had set the standard for a comparable «humanization» of modern architecture by «creating fresh and sympathetic forms» that emphasized the centrality of the person in design, as shown in his Villa Mairea, Noormarku of 1936-38. Aalto's «humanizing influence,» she maintained, «could scarcely have found a more receptive public» than in the United States. The recent impulse towards humanization, Mock further noted, could be ascribed to Frank Lloyd Wright's «renewed creative activity in the middle and later thirties.»<sup>31</sup> Both approaches found parallels in the California modernism represented by Wurster.

Aalto's Baker House rose to completion at MIT in 1948, the year of Mumford and Hitchcock's confrontation at the Museum of Modern Art. Wurster had been appointed as Dean at the School of Architecture, MIT, in 1944. The school had resolved to identify a dean at once convincingly «modern» as well as «regional» and «American»—with the objective of creating a clear institutional alternative to Walter Gropius's recently established «Bauhaus» at Harvard. Later, Wurster recalled having written his first letter to Aalto, to inquire whether he would be interested in teaching at MIT.<sup>32</sup> Aalto arrived as a visiting professor in 1945 and in 1946, he designed MIT's new «senior dormitory,» Baker House, one of the most important works of his architectural career. The commission provided Aalto with the opportunity to demonstrate his «humanizing» philosophy of modern design.

Hitchcock happened to be teaching as a visiting professor at MIT during the years Baker House was constructed, between 1947 and 1949. He in all likelihood conversed with Aalto and he could not have possibly avoided the sight of Aalto's completed design. Still, in an essay of 1951, «The International Style Twenty Years After» Hitchcock continued to argue for the merits of his visual criteria to the interpretation of modern architecture. History was a «set of monuments» and «the idea of style» still had validity. Hitchcock admitted to having difficulty explaining the recent work of both Alvar Aalto and Frank Lloyd Wright with the «international style,» and he further argued that the Bay Region architects had followed the style's principles to the point of parody, although he confessed, «not in the best and most characteristic of their country house work.»<sup>33</sup> What mattered most to Hitchcock was whether indeed 20<sup>th</sup> century modernism was still following the course that he and Johnson had in 1932 initially prescribed for it.

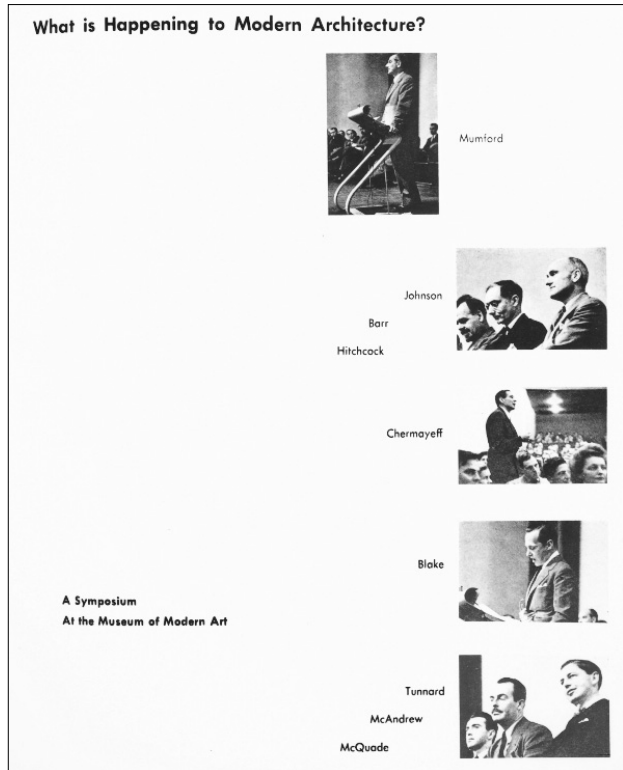
As for Mumford, his passionate defense of California Bay Region architecture at the Museum of Modern Art's «What is Happening to Modern Architecture?» of 1948 had only strengthened his growing convictions about the centrality of the region to the history of modern architecture. In his «Monumentalism, Symbolism, and Style» of 1949, Mumford continued to argue force-

fully for his position as a modernist historian and critic, while also attacking Hitchcock's «narrow canon of modernity,» with its stark forms emanating from the newest centers of fashion in Paris or Berlin. Part of the problem, Mumford noted, was that the historiography of modern architecture should not be conceived in terms of terms of Hitchcock's hegemonic map of style centers and diffusion, but rather in an open-ended, non-hierarchical fashion, which accounted for the actuality of its ongoing dynamic of change in distinctive locations around the world. Regional forms and adaptations would take shape independently, and then would be gathered into the mainstream; different centers—Chicago, Brussels, Paris, San Francisco, Rio de Janeiro—would serve as dynamic foci of activity at different times.<sup>34</sup>

Given the far-reaching disparities in Mumford and Hitchcock's conceptions of modern architecture, their impassioned confrontation at the Museum of Modern Art was perhaps to be expected. The Bay Region style, unfortunately, happened to be the casualty. In retrospect, however, even the purely visual evidence—the sequence of creative work proceeding from Maybeck to Wurster and most recently, to Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull & Whitaker's Sea Ranch of the mid-1960s—shows that there did indeed exist a vital, modern, regional architecture in the California Bay Region, with a lasting intergenerational identity (Figure 9). With its vernacular forms crafted in wood, variety in interdependent indoor and outdoor spaces, and powerful connection to a rugged coastal site, Sea Ranch functioned as a late 20th-century regionalist icon that substantiated Mumford's argument for Bay Region architecture as a continuous, vital, and important parallel development in modern architecture.

By the 1960s, Hitchcock and Mumford had abandoned the argument over the Bay Region as their intellectual trajectories diverged even more markedly in their later careers. That they should have so little to say to each other after 1948 only underscored how differently each viewed his self-appointed role as a historian who influenced the present and also planned the future. Hitchcock had viewed himself as the arbiter of a high style; having tailored a conventional art-historical notion of style to suit the modern era, he promoted the newest aesthetic standard within the western world's expanding domain of influence. For Mumford, architecture continued to be enmeshed in the continuity of an evolving culture, and more than the impeccable evidence of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century academic ideal, it was to serve as a supportive framework for human community, and a carrier of meanings, principally ethical and social, in the civilization that produced it.

*This essay is a shortened version of the talk that I presented at the symposium, «Architecture and Virtuality,» held at the School of Architecture of Barcelona on June 4-5, 2009. Both are based on my chapter, «Lewis Mumford, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, and the Bay Region Style» in The Education of the Architect: Historiography, Urbanism, and the Growth of Architectural Knowledge, edited by Martha Pollak (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1997), pp. 37-85. Please see the chapter for the full text and full set of bibliographic references.*



**Figure 1.** Museum of Modern Art  
Bulletin, 15 (spring 1948).



**Figure 2.** William Wurster, Gregory  
farmhouse, Scotts Valley, California,  
1926-27 (Arts & Architecture, 81  
[July 1964].)



**Figure 3.** William Wurster, *Schuckl Canning Company*, Sunnyvale, California, 1943 (Elizabeth Mock, ed., *Built in U.S.A.: A Survey of Contemporary American Architecture Since 1932*, 1945).



**Figure 5.** Frank Lloyd Wright. *Taliesin III*, Spring Green, Wisconsin, begun 1925 (Frank Lloyd Wright, *A Testament*, 1957).



**Figure 4.** Le Corbusier. *Les Terrasses*, Stein house, Garches, near Paris, 1927-28 (Modern Architecture: International Exhibition, 1932).



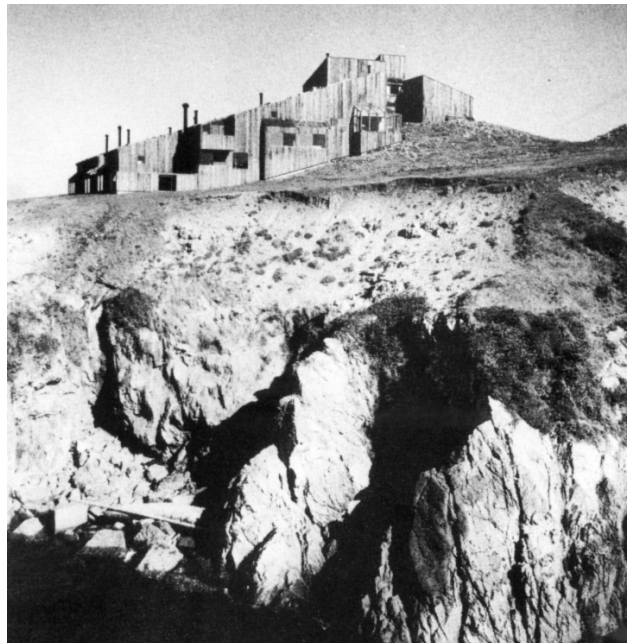
**Figure 6.** Fitz Hugh Lane, *View of Norwich from the West Side of the River*, 1839. Lithograph, 11 3/4 x 16 1/2» (Boston Athenaeum, Massachusetts).



**Figure 7.** Clarence S. Stein and Henry Wright. Radburn, New Jersey, 1928-29 (C. S. Stein, *Towards New Towns for America*, 1957).



**Figure 8.** Clarence Mayhew. Manor house, Contra Costa County, California, 1939 (William Wurster, «San Francisco Bay Region Portfolio,» *Magazine of Art*, 37 [December 1944]).



**Figure 9.** Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull & Whitaker. Sea Ranch condominium, Sea Ranch, California, 1964-66 (Charles Moore, *The Place of Houses*, 1974; photograph by Morley Baer).

## Notes

1. Lewis MUMFORD, «Status Quo,» in «The Skyline,» *The New Yorker*, 11 October 1947, 104-10.
2. «What is Happening to Modern Architecture? A Symposium at the Museum of Modern Art,» *Museum of Modern Art Bulletin*, 15 (Spring 1948).
3. «What is Happening to Modern Architecture?», 5-6, 7-8.
4. *Ibid.*, 18-19, 21.
5. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993 reprint of 1929 edition), and *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1932).
6. Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration*, 162.
7. Lewis MUMFORD, *Sticks & Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955 reprint of 1924 edition).
8. Leo Marx, «Lewis Mumford: Prophet of Organicism,» in *Lewis Mumford: Public Intellectual*, eds. Thomas P. Hughes and Agatha C. Hughes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 167-68.
9. MUMFORD, *Sticks & Stones*, 6-9, 31-38, 84-86.
10. Lewis MUMFORD, *The Brown Decades: A Study of Arts in America, 1865-1895* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971 reprint of 1931 edition), 46, 60-62.
11. MUMFORD, *Sticks & Stones*, 104.
12. *Ibid.*, 9-10, 95.
13. *Ibid.*, 33-35, 55-66, 76, 107-12.
14. Linda SEIDEL, «The Scholar and the Studio: A. Kingsley Porter and the Study of Medieval Architecture in the Decade before the War,» in *The Architectural Historian in America* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1990): 145-47, 155-56, and Helen Searing, «Henry-Russell Hitchcock: The Architectural Historian and Connoisseur,» in *Ibid.*, 253, 263, note 17.
15. Oswald SPENGLER, *The Decline of the West*, 2 vols., trans. from the German by Charles Francis Atkinson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926, 1928).
16. Patrick GEDDES, *City Development: A Study of Parks, Gardens, and Culture-Institutes* (Edinburgh: Geddes & Co., 1904), and *Cities in Evolution* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1915). See also Elizabeth Meller, *Patrick Geddes: Social Evolutionist and City Planner* (London: Routledge, 1990), 300-303, and Lewis Mumford, *Sketches from Life, The Autobiography of Lewis Mumford: The Early Years* (New York: Dial Press, 1982), 144-58.
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18. Lewis MUMFORD, *The Golden Day: A Study of American Literature and Culture* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983 reprint of 1926 edition).
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